

VA CHICAGO LINKS

Chiefs and Co-Chiefs Selected for Transition

As part of the consolidation of inpatient services for VA Chicago, a Governance Committee was established by Joan Cummings, MD, VISN Director. Two of the main recommendations were:

- 1) Establish a period of transition in which both a Chief of Staff and a Co-Chief of Staff would be selected for VA Chicago along with a Chief and Co-Chief for the Medical, Surgical, Neurology and Anesthesiology services.
- 2) Establish a post-transition stage in which a single Chief of Staff would be selected for the system and a Service Chief and Associate Service Chief be selected for each of the above services.

To assure the success of the transition and continue our dual affiliation, it was necessary to achieve a balance between the Northwestern University Medical School and University of Illinois College of Medicine. After lengthy deliberations and consultations with our affiliated medical school deans, the following designations were made for the transition stage:

A public hearing will be held on Wednesday, July 30 from 7 to 9 pm in the Holiday Inn City Centre (300 E. Ohio) to elicit comments from interested parties regarding VA's plan to enter into a long-term enhanced-use lease of its Lakeside property. All staff and veterans are encouraged to attend.

Chief of Staff's Office

Brian P. Schmitt, MD – Chief of Staff

Prakash N. Desai, MD – Co-Chief of Staff

Anesthesiology Service

Guy L. Weinberg, MD – Chief
C. W. Joshi, MD – Co-Chief

Medical Service

Subhash C. Kukreja, MD – Chief

Dale Gerding, MD – Co-Chief

Neurology Service

Jack M. Rozental, MD – Chief
Mary L. Tomyanovich, MD – Co-Chief

Surgical Service

Donald K. Wood, MD – Chief
John J. Coyle, MD – Co-Chief

Mock Move Offers Practice for Transition

Practice makes perfect and VA Chicago's simulated patient move from Lakeside to West Side on June 26 will help assure that events go smoothly during the actual inpatient transition on August 7.

Five volunteers serving as mock patients were to be moved from Lakeside to West Side by ambulance and Medi-Car, although one of the mock patients had a mock coronary arrest and was "transferred" to Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

The mock move was observed by

VISN 12 and Performance

Improvement staff that met with participants later that day to critique the process. The consensus was that VA Chicago was ready for its next step – the movement of inpatient beds for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, which is scheduled for July 17.

"Although there are items we still need to address, the core process worked as planned," says Jeff Gering, Associate Director. "The actual move will be on a larger scale, but we were able to simulate it to a significant degree and the lessons we learned will help prevent any adverse events from occurring on August 7."

LS Cafeteria to Close

Canteen Service has announced it will close the Lakeside cafeteria on August 1 and expand the hours and selection of its food cart in the lobby to serve staff and patients.

The food cart will now offer a light breakfast and lunch menu and will operate between the hours of 7 am and 2 pm on weekdays.

Hot meals, sandwiches and snacks will continue to be available in the vending room near the Erie Street entrance. There will also be snack and beverage vending machines placed in high-traffic areas of the hospital and additional food items available in the Retail Store.

The cafeteria tables and chairs will remain in their present location on

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the fourth floor and can be used by staff, patients and visitors during the normal Retail Store hours of 7:30 am to 3:30 pm.

"With the inpatient transition, we need to focus our resources on the expanding food service needs at West Side," explained Pat Gleason, Chief, Canteen Service. "Shifting staff to West Side will allow for faster service and increased menu options at that location, while guaranteeing that no Canteen Service employees will lose their jobs.

"Despite the Lakeside cafeteria closing, we believe that by expanding the food cart, along with the abundance of other food options available nearby, the Lakeside population will continue to be well-served," says Gleason.

New Focus for Labor Relations Committee

by Jeff Gering, Assoc. Director
Over the next few months many employees will be reassigned to new work areas. The primary focus of the Labor Relations Committee is now to ensure a smooth transition of staff to new locations or job assignments and minimize any disruptions in patient care.

Services have received guidance on the transition and orientation process for staff moving to new work sites. To assure this occurs as smoothly as possible, VA Chicago is establishing a "buddy system".

Every transitioning employee will be linked up with a preceptor to make the move easier. All services were asked to provide a list of their transitioning employees and preceptors by July 7.

Service Chiefs (or their designees) and transitioning employees will be asked to complete orientation checklists for staff moving to new job sites by the end of the first week of the employee's arrival at the new duty station or program area.

DDTC Patients Honored

Drug Dependence Treatment Center sponsored a Patient Recognition Ceremony on Friday evening, June 20, to honor the 65 DDTC patients who have been continuously free from illicit drugs for one or more years. (Two of the patients had 11 years "clean").

The idea for the event originated from staff nurse Gerald Nunnally, who put together a planning committee of DDTC staff and veterans. With assistance from Recreation Service and the Disabled American Veterans and Help Hospitalized Veterans service organizations, patients and their invited guests were treated to inspirational speeches, a catered meal, entertainment and dancing. Each patient received a Certificate of Award that had been created by one of the DDTC patients.

Counseling Supervisor Jim Puryear

may have said it best: "We spend so much of our energy trying to help those still in the throes of addiction that we tend to not give as much attention to those who have made it. We wanted to change that and honor those who have made it." DDTC staff plan to make this an annual event.

Health Assessments Offered for Staff

Staff and veterans already enrolled at VA Chicago are invited to participate in a health assessment fair on Tuesday, July 15 from 8 am to noon in the West Side atrium and Lakeside lobby. It is sponsored by Education Service.

Health screenings will be offered for blood pressure, weight, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Bagels, fruit and educational pamphlets will also be provided.

Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, July 17 – Town Hall Meeting. 2 pm in the Lakeside auditorium, with pic-tel to West Side and Crown Point.

Tuesday, July 22 – Farewell Tea for Dr. Raymond Joehl, who is leaving after 18 years at Lakeside to accept the position of Chief, Surgical Service at Hines VAH. All staff are encouraged to stop by between the hours of 2 to 4 pm in the Lakeside auditorium.